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## Fountain Chambers External Complaints procedure

### Introduction

This document describes Chambers Policy and procedures in relation to client care and the handling of complaints from clients in accordance with the Bar Standards Board Practice Management Standards.

### Responsibility

Each Barrister and member of staff is personally responsible for complying with the Client Care and Complaints Policy in respect their own dealing with clients. Details of the Policy will be included in Chambers Client Care letter which will be sent to the Client by the relevant Clerk following receipt of instructions. By complying with the Practice Management Standards, and maintaining Chambers' usual high standards, and maintaining Chambers usual high professional standards, we aim to minimize client complaints but we recognize that those which do arise must be addressed promptly and effectively.

### Client Care and Complaints procedure

1. The head of Chambers, will maintain a record of every formal complaint showing:

- 1, the name and address of the complainant firm and/or individual.
  - 2, the nature of the complaint
  - 3, the Barrister or member of staff to whom the complaint relates
2. A file will be maintained for each complaint including all correspondence pertaining to it
  3. Any Barrister or member of staff receiving a formal complaint will forward a copy to the Head of Chambers
  4. The Head of Chambers (or a person to whom authority has been delegated in the event that the complaint involves the Head of Chambers) will notify the complainant within 7 days of receipt of the complaint that it is under investigation and give a date by which he/she will make contact again.
  5. The Head of Chambers (or the person to whom authority has been delegated) will carry out all necessary investigations and give all relevant people the opportunity to state their opinions on the circumstances of the complaint.
  6. At the end of the investigations, the head of Chambers (or person to whom authority has been delegated) will take one of the following steps.
    - 1, inform the complainant that the complaint has been investigated and found not to be justified, explaining why
    - 2, inform the complainant the complaint has been investigated and found to be justified, and either (a) explain the remedial action or (b) arrange a meeting between the complainant and the Head of Chambers (or the person to whom authority has been delegated) with a review to resolving the complaint and also explain to the complainant his/her right to bring the matter to the attention of the Legal Ombudsman.
  7. Any complaint which involves negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance will be brought to the attention of the insurers as soon as possible.

8. In consultation with Chambers Management Committee and all the relevant individuals, the Head of Chambers will decide upon and implement any necessary changes in procedures, or take other appropriate steps, to reduce the possibility of a similar complaint arising again.
9. Complaint files will be retained for a period of 6 months to allow the complainant to take up his /her complaint with the Legal Ombudsman should he/she choose to do so. The fact that a complainant has first approached Chambers will not preclude the Legal Ombudsman from considering the same complaint.